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Expectations rise for county MRF

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Sullivan County may become the home of a materials recovery facility, or MRF, where recyclable material from throughout the county would be collected and processed.

"It's very conceptual at this time," Sullivan County



Claremont

Manager
Ed Gil de
Rubio said

Tuesday night during a public forum on the construction of a MRF in Sullivan County.

More than 30 people attended the meeting representing many local communities.

"The commission has been very proactive," Gil de Rubio said. "To have some savings you really need to have some regional cooperation."

The idea of a MRF stems

from the need to reduce the solid waste stream generated in the county and the Gil De Rubio said he is currently formulating a business plan.

Tony Barbagallo, the facilities manager for the Chittenden Solid Waste District in Vermont spoke at the forum and discussed how his district has profited from the use of a MRF.

"There are huge economy of scale benefits," Barbagallo said. "Economics are better in non-recycle states where an aluminum can is not a five cent redemption value. Aluminum can be \$2,000 per ton."

Barbagallo said his facility processes 38,000 tons per year of recyclable material including paper, plastics and metal. His MRF employs 27 people and operates seven hours per day.

"It's been amazingly reliable," Barbagallo said.

The \$2.5 million facility opened in 1993 and is currently paid an average of \$81 per ton for recycled material. He said there is one major reason for the variability in the prices paid for recyclables.

"China, China, China, China," Barbagallo repeated. "They have a booming economy and they buy a lot of our paper."

Duncan Watson, the deputy director of the Keene Public Works Department, also spoke at the meeting and discussed the benefits of operating a MRF.

"There are a lot of issues to consider," Watson said. "It's not an easy process."

Watson said over the last few years his facility has operated with a profit and is still able to offer free recycling to

city residents.

"Tax dollars do not support our operation," Watson said. "We are supported by tipping fees."

Watson said he believes a dual-stream MRF would be the best choice for Sullivan County. In a dual-stream system, paper products are separated from all other recyclables.

"The population base in the area is too small," Watson said. "This isn't rocket science. Materials handling has been around for a while."

The first public forum was held in February and Gil de Rubio said he plans to keep moving forward.

"We'll keep looking into it until we hit a brick wall or get a facility," Gil de Rubio said.

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